

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The Title, Abstract and Specification have all been amended above as to obviate all outstanding formal grounds of rejection.

In response to the rejection of claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 101, the claims have also been amended above so as to more explicitly indicate a use of a computer and the production of a tangible (search) result output. Accordingly, this ground of rejection is now believed to have been mooted.

The rejection of claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has objected to the preamble of independent claims 1 and 7 on the basis that there is "insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim."

Since the preamble of the claim necessarily has no antecedent basis in the claim, the undersigned is at a loss to understand exactly what the Examiner's objection might be. Clearly the preamble of both these claims accurately describes the subject matter which is thereafter positively claimed so as to reach a useful result (*i.e.*, accessing information).

The rejection of claims 1-3, 5, 7 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is allegedly being made "obvious" based on Liddy '940 in view Ozawa JP '798 is respectfully traversed.

In applicant's exemplary embodiments, a user is able to exploit feedback from previous searching and retrieval experiences of other users. This information is used to identify the search criteria that have proved most effective in retrieving relevant information within particular information categories in the past. Thus, by modifying the current search criteria using previous

results, there is an increased probability that a corresponding search response will contain more relevant information.

An example of such operation is illustrated in Figures 2 and 3 and described in the accompanying text on page 8, line 3 to page 15, line 7. In summary, independent claim 7 is directed towards a method that calculates weightings for various search criteria associated with a document ("set of information" as claimed) based on relevance feedback from previous searches in order to determine the relevance of each criteria to any given document. Associated means for performing such a method are recited in independent apparatus claim 1.

Specifically, claim 7 recites steps (i), (ii) and (iii), which are illustrated in a preferred embodiment in steps 200, 225 and 230 respectively of Figure 2 and relate to gathering and storing feedback of the relevance of a retrieved document. Note that a "Set of information" as defined in the claims can be interpreted as a document or a group of documents as described in preferred embodiments. Steps (iv) and (v) relate to key steps calculating weightings for each criteria and identifying the criteria with weighting above a predetermined threshold as described in more detail on page 11, line 11 to page 15, line 7. These results can then be presented to the user to help choose between search documents or used to modify the search results presented.

The Examiner has acknowledged that Liddy fails to disclose several features from claim 7 but alleges that those deficiencies are cured by Ozawa. The applicant respectfully disagrees.

Ozawa describes a system that automatically selects an optimal information retrieval technique when multiple information retrieval techniques are available (see page 5, para 1 and page 7, para 7). This is done by comparing a judgment as to whether or not something should be retrieved produced by a retrieval technique and the feedback given by a user (see page 14, para 21-23). A key point to note from Ozawa is that it is trying to determine the optimal retrieval

technique, based on feedback from users, which is different from the present invention where relevant search documents ("sets of information") are determined by analyzing feedback based on specific search criterion.

Specifically, step (iv) of claim 7 recites "selecting one or more sets of information...and calculating, for each search criterion recorded in respect to each of said one or more selected sets of information, a weighting...." Thus, a weighting is calculated for each search criterion for each set of information (the set of information being a retrieved document). This is illustrated in the table on page 12, where every document (A, B, C D, etc) has a weighting associated with every search criterion (DIM, IM, KM, etc.).

However, in Ozawa, as described on page 15, para 35, it is the retrieval technique that is analyzed (step 14) and judgment made as to whether the retrieval technique produced was successful. There is no suggestion of analyzing data according to each of the resulting search documents as in the presently rejected claims .

Furthermore, step (v) of claim 7 recites "identifying, in respect of said one or more selected sets of information from step (iv), every recorded search criterion having, in respect of each said selected set of information, a weighting in excess of a predetermined threshold."

Again, this highlights a key feature in the presently rejected claims of identifying every search criteria for each selected document a weighting which exceeds a certain threshold. This is illustrated in the table on page 13, which indicates every search criterion that exceeds a threshold for every document with an "X." See also description on page 12, line 15 to page 13, line 9. In contrast, Ozawa only looks at weightings for search techniques without consideration of individual search criteria.

Moreover, there is no suggestion in Ozawa of modifying the technique to come closer to the invention as here claimed because it is only concerned with improving searches by looking at and optimizing the retrieval technique used, whereas the claims at issue try to improve searches by looking at individual search criterion for each retrieved document.

Therefore, method claim 7 and corresponding apparatus claim 1, are both novel and non-obvious in light of the cited prior art.

The rejection of claims 4, 6, 8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 103 as allegedly being made "obvious" based on Liddy/Ozawa in further view of Driscoll '502 is also respectfully traversed.

Fundamental deficiencies of both the first and second references have already been noted above with respect to parent claims 1 and 7. The tertiary reference to Driscoll does not supply these deficiencies. Furthermore, there is no suggestion in any of these references for the selective reconstruction of bits and pieces from these three references now suggested by the Examiner.

The rejection of claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. 103 as allegedly being made "obvious" based on Liddy/Ozawa/Driscoll in further view Gray '335 is also respectfully traversed.

Once again, fundamental deficiencies in at least first and second references have already been noted above and neither Driscoll nor Gray supply those deficiencies.

Accordingly, under these circumstances, it is not believed necessary at this time to point out the further deficiencies of either Driscoll or Gray with respect to the dependent claims.

The Examiner's attention is also drawn to new method claims 13-14 and analogous apparatus claims 15-16. It will be noted that all of these claims require, inter alia, maintaining, for each of plural stored items of information, a store of search criteria previously used by plural users and individually weighted to represent the proportion of prior users who are considered to

have found a respectively associated stored item of information to be relevant to a particular search criterion. The claims also require providing an information retrieval tool output to a user-input search criterion using such store of weighted search criteria.

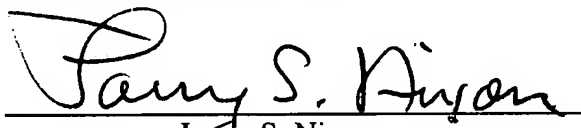
As the Examiner has already acknowledged, Liddy does not have any such teaching and, as noted above, neither does Ozawa—or any other of the cited references.

Attention is directed to the attached PCT International Search Report for this application and each reference cited therein as well as a copy of additional documents together with the Information Disclosure Statement fee for this stage of prosecution. A Form PTO/SB/08a is also attached. Official consideration and citation of each such reference is requested.

Accordingly, this entire application is now believed to be in allowable condition and a formal notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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